



# Greater Yellowstone Coalition

*People protecting the lands, waters, and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, now and for future generations.*

SENATE FISH AND GAME

EXHIBIT NO. 5

DATE 3/17/11

FILE NO. 390

March 17, 2011

Dear Chairman Brenden and members of the Senate Fish and Game Committee,

This afternoon your committee will consider SB 390 which fundamentally changes the way the management of lions, bears, wolves and coyotes is funded, risking the loss of over \$20 million in federal funding to support wildlife management in Montana. We ask that you oppose SB 390.

This bill creates a new wildlife population management account and directs a \$1 increase in the wildlife conservation license fee be deposited in this account. The bill further requires Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) to use these funds to contract with U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services for the management of mountain lions, bears, wolves and coyotes.

First and foremost, we are concerned about the potential diversion of license dollars to the USDA Wildlife Services for purposes of "predator control." As discussed in the fiscal note, this diversion risks the loss of \$20 million in federal funding with enormous consequences for all wildlife management in Montana. SB 390 should be defeated based on this issue alone.

According to its FY 2008 state report (the most recent available on its website), USDA Wildlife Services' total Montana budget is approximately \$3.5 million of which about \$2 million is federal money and \$1.5 million is contributed by cooperators including agricultural producers and local governments.

We do not support using license fees to fund Wildlife Services which is not a wildlife agency. The management of valued native species such as mountain lions, bears and wolves should be left in the hands of our wildlife professionals with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. This diversion of funds threatens the positions of biologists and trained wildlife managers who care for the public's wildlife

Please vote no on SB 390.

Sincerely,

Barb Cestero, Montana Director